

Wildlife Program

Week of October 29 – November 4, 2012

LANDS DIVISION

Colockum Wildlife Area Water Access Site: The Capital Asset Management Program (CAMP) construction crew completed renovation of the access site on the Colockum Wildlife Area providing boating access to the Columbia River. The gravel launch was replaced with a new concrete plank launch. Accessibility was improved with the installation of accessible parking, a vault toilet and a boat loading platform. The turnaround area and entrance road were asphalt paved. A new overflow parking area was constructed.



The before (left) and after (right) views of the access site ramp renovation that improved boating access to the Columbia River on the Colockum Wildlife Area.



Accessibility was improved on the Colockum Wildlife Area with the installation of accessible parking, a vault toilet and a boat loading platform.

WILDLIFE DIVERSITY DIVISION

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Flammulated Owl Survey Review - Natural Resource Scientist Joe Buchanan summarized information from the 2012 Flammulated Owl survey conducted in Regions 1-3 and the eastern portion of Region 5. District biologists (and a few volunteers) detected Flammulated Owls on 46 occasions while surveying 31 routes, each consisting of 10 stations that were visited three times. Most detections were from mixed-conifer and ponderosa pine cover types, but individual detections occurred in the other three cover types (lodgepole pine, mesic forest, oak woodland). Results from this effort will be included in a Western state's analysis expected during fall or winter 2012.

WILDLIFE OUTREACH DIVISION

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Rehabilitation: Northwest Wildlife Rehabilitation Center welcomed a new Director last month from British Columbia. Tricia Thompson is assisting the Director with becoming acquainted with Washington State wildlife rehabilitation rules and to get her permitted as a Washington Wildlife Rehabilitator. The previous Director remains with NW Rehabilitation Center to make sure the facility has a permit and to train their new Director.

After some discussion, the Wildlife Rehabilitation Washington Administrative Code (WAC) revision review date, Commission Meeting and Public Hearing has been pushed back a month. Thompson completed another WAC revision with additional changes related to regulating and clarifying Wildlife Rehabilitation in Washington State.

The Grant to Wildlife Rehabilitators is open and posted on the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) website at http://wdfw.wa.gov/grants/wildlife_rehabilitators/. Thompson is in the process of creating a more detailed database for all past grantees and applicants and is organizing electronic files to make the review and management of the grant more efficient.

Scientific Collection Permits (SCP): Tricia Thompson reviewed and sent in for approval three SCP applications. One application is from a wildlife rehabilitator in Oroville with the goal of educating the public about raptors.

Thompson works closely with the Region 1, Portland, OR, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Migratory Bird Permit Biologists reviewing and verifying falconers and wildlife rehabilitators for federal permitting. An issue has arisen with a Washington rehabilitator who has less than standard hygiene at the care facility and will need additional inspections by Thompson in order to obtain an education permit from the USFWS.

Falconry: Thompson processed and issued two upgrades, one to General and one to Master. Thompson also reviewed applications and tests for two Falconers and sent their information to the Facility Inspection Coordinator to have their facilities inspected for permitting.

Education: Thompson reviewed additional edits on the Wildlife Diseases fact sheets written for the WDFW Conservation-Wildlife Health webpage. She is also working on collecting photographs for these web fact sheets. Some of these fact sheets are particularly important as they inform the public about zoonotic diseases (diseases passed from wildlife to humans).

GOAL 3: USE SOUND BUSINESS PRACTICES, DELIVER HIGH-QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE

Wildlife Outreach Volunteers: Volunteer Management Coordinator James Chandler worked in Region 2 on the Pygmy rabbit Project managed by Wildlife Research Scientist Penny Becker. Penny is creating a breeding enclosure to reintroduce the Pygmy rabbit at a Sage Brush Flat Wildlife Area expansion site, in Ephrata. James coordinated an average of seven to 10 volunteers over three days, handling logistics, including providing refreshments and lunches for volunteers, courtesy of Barb's Drive In.

The volunteers, 30 percent female and 70 percent male, consisted of a master hunter, former police officer, members of The Nature Conservancy (staying overnight from Seattle), and former seasonal DFW employees, all around retirement age.

The volunteers built a five acre breeding enclosure for the Pygmy rabbits. This construction required the volunteers to dig a two foot trench around the perimeter so the meshed wire fence could be placed two feet underground and up to six feet above ground. The construction required heavy physical labor, digging through rocky and rough terrain. WDFW Research Scientist Penny Becker is urgently seeking more volunteers to complete building the Pygmy rabbit enclosure before the end of November.

REGION 1

Wolf Management

District 1: Biologist Shepherd contacted rancher Pete Guglielmino concerning a Livestock Damage Prevention Contract. Biologist Shepherd met with the Dawson family at their ranch and discussed the range rider season, wolves, and future efforts. Biologist Shepherd collected the range rider gear including an ATV, satellite phone, GPS, radio-telemetry gear, and various other items. An end of season meeting with Conservation Northwest, the Dawsons, and WDFW was planned. Biologist Shepherd met with U.S. Air Force/Department of Defense employee Todd Foster discussing sign of multiple wolves in Sherman Creek. After a call to Colville Tribal personnel, it was determined to be the Nc'icn wolf pack. Technician Baker worked at sorting gear, summarizing camera work, and closing down the field season as her position ended. Biologist Shepherd was contacted by the Olson Ranch reporting a wolf in the hay fields north of Rocky Creek, and the wolf was hazed using a vehicle.

District 3: Biologist Vekasy followed-up on recent report of wolf sighting of 5 wolves together outside of Dayton, did not find any evidence but recent rains may have washed away sign. He also updated spreadsheet of trail cam locations and duration of use this year for wolf monitoring.

GOAL 2: PROVIDE SUSTAINABLE FISHING, HUNTING AND OTHER WILDLIFE-RELATED RECREATIONAL EXPERIENCES

Wildlife Areas

Sherman Creek Wildlife Area (SCWA) Pheasant Release – Friday was the third pheasant release for this season.



Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Palmer and a helpful volunteer setting up for the Sherman Creek Wildlife Area pheasant release.

Private Lands/Access

Biologist Rasley sent a Dad and his daughter out to Mead Ranch (one of Biologist Davis's cooperators). The daughter had a branched bull tag and they were looking to shoot her first elk. They were successful.



REGION 2



“Sinlahekin Eye Candy” at Forde Lake, Sinlahekin Wildlife Area, October 2012. Justin Haug photo.

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Riparian planting project: Biologists Gregory and Finger participated in planting 3,000 willow and dogwood cuttings along Middle Crab Creek. The planting went smoothly running four water jets on two ATV-mounted trash pumps. We were able to install the cuttings in about nine hours with approximately 10 volunteers each day. There is another work party on November 17-18. This project is expected have many positive results including stream bank stabilization and habitat enhancement to benefit variety of wildlife species. It is a great opportunity for anyone interested, especially those looking for the volunteer hours required to maintain their Master Hunter status.



Construction of Dormaier Breeding Enclosure: Research Scientist Becker and biologist Eidson led a crew of staff and volunteers to build a new breeding enclosure on Dormaier unit. Three more days next week are needed to finish.

Recovery Fund Pre-Proposal: Becker submitted a USFWS Recovery Fund pre-proposal for pygmy rabbits and collaborated with others for a habitat connectivity pre-proposal focused on pygmy rabbits.

Wildlife Areas

Driscoll Island Cold-water Refugia Project – Manager Swedberg and assistant manager Haug met with representatives of the Colville Tribe, Trout Unlimited and Cascade Columbia Salmon Enhancement Group; as well as WDFW employees Connie Iten, Ken Bevis and Gina McCoy to discuss a proposed project to develop cold-water steelhead refugia areas within two historic channels on Driscoll Island. The group discussed the data gathered on the island over this past spring and summer to see if the project would be feasible. More discussion is necessary and questions needed to be answered before the project would move to the next phase. One issue of enormous concern is where to put 3,000 to 5,000 yds³ of excavated material. Other unanswered issues overshadowing the proposal include keeping developed channels open in the face of the high numbers of beaver in the area, who like to build dams and conduct other stream and bank engineering activities, avian predators, river otters and mink predation that would occur in a relatively narrow and confined area.

Washington State Prescribed Fire Council – Manager Swedberg and Dry Forest Restoration Specialist Guse attended the first and formative meeting of the Washington State Prescribed Fire Council. There is now an official statewide prescribed fire council with representatives acting as members or liaison from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), U.S. Forest Service (USFS), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Center for Natural Land Management (CNLM), Washington Cattlemen's Association, Washington Contract Fire Fighters, Department of Defense, Department of Ecology (DOE), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and WDFW to name a few.

GOAL 2: PROVIDE SUSTAINABLE FISHING, HUNTING AND OTHER WILDLIFE-RELATED RECREATIONAL EXPERIENCES

Wildlife Management

Waterfowl survey: Biologists Finger and Gregory visited Stratford, Round, and Banks Lakes to count Canada geese. The lakes were visited on two days and a total of less than 400 geese were seen. It is not unusual to observe 20,000 or more geese during the last week in October. The timing of the survey coincided with survey dates for the past six years. It is suspected that this decrease in birds observed is due to a shift in migration timing possibly related to the weather on their summer range in Canada.



Topic 2: Regulated Access Areas: Natural Resource Technician Will Carpenter checked and adjusted water levels in the managed wetland cells in the Frenchman Ponds Regulated Access Area (FRAA) and Winchester Regulated Access Area (WRAA) as they continued to fill.



GOAL 3: USE SOUND BUSINESS PRACTICES, DELIVER HIGH-QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE

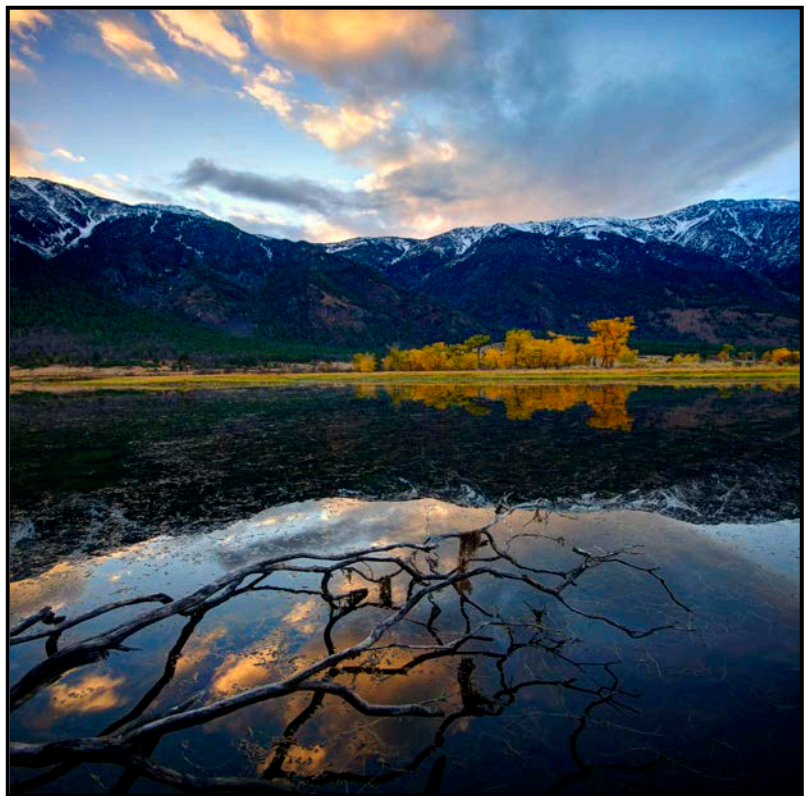
Wildlife Areas

Carter Mountain Spring Development – Assistant manager Haug met with Terri Williams of the Okanogan Conservation District to inspect the recently implemented spring development project on the Carter Mountain Unit. The work was an overall success with only a couple of minor improvements to be made. Those changes will be checked one final time before the project is completed.



Frenchman Coulee: Wildlife Area Manager Greg Fitzgerald met with Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) representatives, members of the rock climbing community and the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission (WSPRC) Lands Program Manager, Steve Hahn, in Frenchman Coulee to discuss a BOR proposal to create a camping area on the BOR-owned portion of the rock climbing area and if or how WSPRC might assist in the management.

Buzzard Lake Boundary Marking – Natural Resource Technician Boulger worked with inmates from the Okanogan County Jail to install T-posts next to boundary marker stakes marking the recently surveyed Buzzard Lake Wildlife Area. Brandon and the crew finished 95 percent of the marking in what turned out to be very difficult working conditions. The new posts will be a more permanent feature on the boundary and better weather the long, difficult conditions winter offers in this area.



Rough-legged Hawk near Spectacle Lake (left). Looking west toward Chopaka Mountain at the Similkameen-Chopaka Wildlife Area provides this viewable opportunity (right).

REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Areas

Oak Creek Wildlife Area - Worrell Ranch Elk Fence: Manager Huffman checked on the Yakima Construction Shop fencing crew's progress on the improvement of the elk fence on the

Worrell Ranch in West Valley. The crew repaired the fence on the steepest part of the slope and is making good progress. They are placing rock jacks on almost all posts and will re-stretch the wire.



Employees from the Yakima Construction Shop work to build a rock jack on the elk fence on the Worrell Ranch (above). Located in the West Valley of Yakima, the fence has blown down multiple times since last winter (below).



Wenas Wildlife Area--Wenas Lake Fire: Wenas Wildlife Area Manager Cindi Confer Morris field reviewed the Hessler Flats area that burned in the Wenas Lake fire to determine level and type of restoration efforts needed this fall. Manager Confer Morris also completed a PAM form requesting an emergency short-term closure for the Hessler/Kelley Hollow area that burned in the Wenas Lake fire. With the vegetation burned off, the area has seen an increase in illegal off-road use. The fragile soils need to be protected until vegetation is re-established on the site. Areas that didn't burn as hot are greening up and attracting deer and elk and increasing post-season poaching concerns.



View of Hessler Flats area after the Wenas Lake Fire.

Wenas Elk Fence Replacement: Manager Confer Morris and Assistant Manager Jody Taylor continued working on plans and process for replacing the three miles of elk fence that burned in the Wenas Lake fire using a new metal post design.



The elk fence section that needs replacement following the Wenas Lake fire.

Little Parke Creek Fire: L.T. Murray Wildlife Area Manager Shana Winegeart coordinated with vendor Cline Air to arrange spraying and seeding of priority areas in the Little Parke Creek burn. Seed will be delivered next week and restoration work will take place between November 13th and 21st, depending on weather.



Little Parke Creek dozer line and riparian-adjacent areas targeted for rehabilitation.

REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Oregon Spotted Frog Proposal: Biologist Danilson assisted Olympia area staff in developing a pre-proposal for US Fish and Wildlife Service recovery funding for additional Oregon Spotted Frog work to be conducted in western Washington in 2013. While this proposal has a broader context than the 2013 survey work in Whatcom and Skagit Counties (funded by a different USFWS grant), a significant part of the work will focus on Oregon Spotted Frog populations in District 14 that were located during spring surveys conducted in 2011 and 2012. The primary focus of the project (if funded) is to address and reconcile the conflict between certain riparian restoration and conservation actions and the adverse effects these may have on highly limited Oregon Spotted Frog breeding habitat.

Northern Puget Sound Lesser Snow Goose Study: With goose capture goals nearly met in the Port Susan Bay and Skagit County area, Biologists Danilson and Evenson have switched gears to

initiate ground-based surveys throughout the areas where snow geese are distributed in Whatcom, Skagit and Snohomish Counties. This includes finalizing driving survey routes, fine tuning data collection protocols and preparing for the second aerial survey flight (scheduled for the week of November 5th).

All geese captured to date have been banded and most are outfitted with a brown neck collar with a three figure alphanumeric identification code. A subset of geese is being equipped with collar mounted VHF radios instead of the brown neck collars to provide information on goose movements and habitat preferences.

Hozomeen Wolf Monitoring: Biologist DeBruyn began setting up motion activated cameras in the North Cascades National Park to monitor potential wolf travel corridors. DeBruyn hiked into extreme northeastern Whatcom County to cover some promising topographical bottlenecks. The cameras have enough memory and battery life to remain functional until the spring snowmelt allows retrieval. DeBruyn also assisted National Park Service (NPS) Ranger Gabe Asarian with setting up security cameras to monitor park facilities that have been the target of thieves recently. The NPS cameras were also baited with scent lure in case wolves or other carnivores encountered them. DeBruyn and Asarian closed up the area for public use for the winter.

Game Management Unit (GMU) 485 Quality Hunt: Biologist Anderson discussed progress of the permit hunt in the Green River Watershed administered by Tacoma Power. As of Wednesday last week, six deer, four elk and one bear had been taken. This includes two youth hunters bagging a three by four and a four by five, one of which was their first hunt. Another adult got a five by six bull. Overall, many are happy with their opportunity to hunt this area and feel lucky to have nabbed a permit in the random draw. This hunt ended November 2.

Heron Management advice to Seattle: Biologist Anderson provided heron management recommendations and consultation for a proposed build adjacent to the Kiwanis Ravine Heronry. This is the largest heronry in Seattle at around 90 nests or so annually. Also, this is the heronry WDFW has cameras in. Once the heron season gets in full swing again (April or so) check out the camera: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/wildwatch/>

Osprey Conflict Reduction permits: Biologist Anderson has consulted with a number of cell tower management entities regarding cell tower maintenance needs that require WDFW to issue a nest removal permit. These permits are issued when the nest is inactive, during the non-breeding season. Osprey nests cannot be removed or destroyed without a permit from WDFW during this time. When Osprey are active in the nest (bird or eggs in nest) the nest, birds, and eggs are protected both under state and federal laws. During the winter season, when osprey are south in e.g. Mexico, WDFW requires a permit under the state Wildlife Interaction Rules to remove the inactive nest. It must be a damage or safety situation. Information on the Wildlife Interaction Rules can be found here: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/rules/>

Wildlife Areas

Lake Terrell Dam: Volunteers from the Bellingham Technical College worked anchoring stumps and other wood logs at the Lake Terrell Dam project site.

GOAL 2: PROVIDE SUSTAINABLE FISHING, HUNTING AND OTHER WILDLIFE-RELATED RECREATIONAL EXPERIENCES

Wildlife Management

Pacific Flyway Shorebird Census: Biologist Milner met with Gary Slater of Ecostudies Institute and two members of Pilchuck Audubon Chapter to discuss organizational items for the upcoming citizen science shorebird survey. This effort has been piloted in California and this year we will conduct censuses of Port Susan, Skagit, Padilla and Samish Bays, enlisting the assistance of birders from the area to count shorebirds on three occasions in November and December. The first volunteer training will be held in Mill Creek on November 7.

Winter Waterfowl Flights: Biologist Danilson worked with Section Manager Kraege and others in Region 4 to develop a plan for the 2012-2013 waterfowl flights. These flights include monthly waterfowl flights (November-January) from Port Susan Bay north to the Canadian border as well as brant flights of Skagit and Whatcom Counties. The general waterfowl counts are part of a long-term data set that provides a breakout of the geographic distribution of the primary waterfowl species that winter in northern Puget Sound. The brant flights are more limited in geographic scope and area also used to determine whether there are sufficient brant numbers to support a limited brant hunting season in Skagit County bays.

Wildlife Areas

DeBay Slough, Ebey Island and the Samish Unit: Natural Resource Specialist (NRS) Greg Meis and Natural Resource Tech (NRT) Curran Cosgrove posted the Swan Reserve boundary signs near the DeBay's Slough hunt unit. NRS Meis and NRT Cosgrove checked the water control structures on the Samish Unit. Limited water has accumulated on site but waterfowl numbers have increased in the area and are beginning to utilize the barley plantings.

Pheasant Release: Manager Kessler and volunteers released 450 pheasants for the regular pheasant hunting season on Lake Terrell, Intalco and BP Units. Volunteers ran the majority of the release program on the Skagit Wildlife Area units.

GOAL 3: USE SOUND BUSINESS PRACTICES, DELIVER HIGH-QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE

Wildlife Management

November Crossing Paths: Biologist Anderson, along with a team of other WDFW biologists, provided information and review of the November Crossing Paths e-letter. This month covers wintering hummingbird management, as well as thoughts on winter feeding of birds in general: http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/crossing_paths/

Native Fish for backyard ponds: Biologist Anderson and Fish Biologist Spinelli worked together to provide advice to National Wildlife Federation staff regarding management of backyard ponds, introduction of fish, and legalities around native fish. In general, for a backyard

pond that it not so big and not quite a fully fledged wetland pond – it is best to avoid fish as they pretty much eat any other wildlife that would use the pond. One can introduce e.g. koi, but it pretty much is a “koi pond” in those cases. Also, introduction of native fish is generally not allowed. One can seek a permit for some of our game fish (e.g. trout) – but the pond needs to be quite large and more functioning as a natural wetland. There are stipulations around this as well and it requires working with the fish program to examine if the situation is appropriate. Other native fish and wildlife cannot be transported or introduced. One has to provide habitat and let nature come into it on its own.

More information on pond management and stocking fish in appropriate pond situations can be found here: http://wdfw.wa.gov/licensing/fish_transport/
<http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/birdbaths/index.html>

Western Bat Working Group Newsletter: Biologist Anderson provided summary of bat survey efforts in King County to be submitted to the Western Bat Working Group. Local bat survey efforts involved pilot work with members of Bats Northwest to examine bat use areas and partial species list using acoustic detection methods. Surveys were conducted on WDFW lands throughout the lower Snoqualmie Valley – Stillwater, Cherry Valley and Crescent Lake Wildlife Management Units. Data is being summarized and examined currently for areas of bat use on the wildlife units as well as species detected. Bats Northwest is a local non-profit that provides education and outreach, conducts survey, and generally promotes our Pacific Northwest bats. Information on Bats Northwest can be found here: <http://www.batsnorthwest.org/>

Get out and discover what wildlife watching and hunting opportunities are at your local WDFW Wildlife Area at http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas/

Wildlife Areas

Skagit Wildlife Area Headquarters: WDFW Crew from Capital Asset Management Program continued brush removal and began dredging Wiley Slough. WDFW staff has been coordinating with Dike District #22 to be certain desired drainage standards are being met. Natural Resource Specialist Meis and Natural Resource Tech Cosgrove repaired shearlog connection on the tide gate to keep large woody debris and other vegetation from entering the tide gates.

Manager Rotton is coordinating with Washington Waterfowl Association on the installation of shell receptacles for this hunting season to be installed at the Headquarters and Samish Units.

Private Lands/Access

GMU 418 Elk Hunting Access: Region 4 private lands staff surveyed the GMU for hunter activity, logging operations, and unwanted activity. Biologist Roozen met with successful elk hunters, collected access keys, and recorded harvest information.

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program: Biologist Roozen met with multiple partner landowners to discuss access to their land. Many units opened this week with only a few units remaining.

Technicians Otto and Deyo continued blind construction and prepared parking at multiple hunt units in the Region. Region 4 private land staff began scheduled surveys of hunt units.

Snow Goose Quality Program: Region 4 private lands staff readied parking for the hunt units and began monitoring public use at the sites.

GOAL 4: MAINTAIN A HIGHLY SKILLED AND MOTIVATED WORKFORCE

Wildlife Management

Waterfowl Aerial Survey Planning: Biologists Milner, Cyra, DeBruyn and Danilson met to plan and schedule winter waterfowl counts beginning the first week of November. Staffing changes over the last two years have meant additional training and planning to get the surveys completed and we are confident that the surveys will go well this year.

Aircraft Safety: Assistant District Biologist Cyra continued work on aircraft flight following planning, survey logistics, and safety planning.

Swan Mortality and Morbidity Seasonal Technician Recruitment: The season swan technician position has been filled by Sherman Anderson. After a brief separation from a fisheries position with WDFW, Sherman will again join the agency for his new position here in District 14 on November 16.

REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Western Gray Squirrel: Biologists Anderson, George, and Van Leuven met with Research Scientist Vander Haegen from the Science Division to deploy western gray squirrel hair tube traps on the Klickitat Wildlife Area.

An evaluation is being done to test the effectiveness of using three inch versus four inch traps for collecting hair samples in the Klickitat population. Elsewhere in the state, western gray squirrel presence can be detected using three inch diameter traps. However, the squirrels in Klickitat County are larger, and three inch traps may be ineffective here. Hair samples are being



Preparing hair tube traps for western gray squirrels on the Klickitat Wildlife Area.

used to determine presence/absence and as genetic markers for individual animals in various study areas. California ground squirrels should not interfere significantly since they have entered hibernation. The Western Gray Squirrel is a Washington State threatened species that has a limited distribution found in Puget Sound, select regions of the North Cascades, in Yakima and Klickitat counties.



Hair tube traps set on the west grid.

In addition, Biologists Anderson and Vander Haegen met with Hancock Forest Management representatives to discuss current western gray squirrel research being conducted on their Klickitat Managed Forest. Hancock Forest Management is currently working on western gray squirrel ecology on select forest harvest units.

Cackling and General Goose Surveys: In cooperation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, California Department of Fish and Game as well as British Columbia, Region 5 Wildlife Biologists conducted surveys for cackling Canada geese. The survey involves locating flocks of cacklers and examining the birds for neck collars. Twelve-hundred cackling Canada geese were captured and marked on their breeding grounds in western Alaska's Yukon/Kuskokwim National Wildlife Refuge during the summer of 2011, with an additional 400+ birds marked in 2012. The survey protocol involves two repetitions of the effort and will generate a mark/re-sight estimate for the total population of cackling Canada geese.



Port Vancouver dusky Canada geese.

The small Canada geese are of particular management concern because they are used extensively for subsistence by the native peoples of western Alaska, provide recreational hunting in Washington, Oregon, and California but also cause extensive damage to agricultural crops. During the past two

weeks of surveying fewer flocks of cackling Canada geese were seen than in past years. One collar was observed by WDFW biologists in Lewis County and two collared cacklers were observed in Clark County. No collars were observed in Cowlitz or Wahkiakum counties.

General goose surveys that focus on the dusky Canada goose in SW Washington and NW Oregon commenced this week and will be conducted biweekly through April. The purpose of these surveys is to observe collared geese to aid in population estimation and survival and movement analysis. One collared dusky was observed by WDFW biologists in Lewis County and two collared dusksies were observed in Clark County. No collars were observed in Cowlitz or Wahkiakum counties.

Mazama Pocket Gopher Surveys: Biologist Bergh completed the sixth wave of Mazama pocket gopher random plot surveys in Lewis County. She also contacted several landowners about access to their property for further random plot surveys in the county. The survey period wraps up at the end of next week.

Wildlife Areas

Mt. St. Helens Wildlife Area

St. Helens Forage Enhancement: Wildlife Area Manager Hauswald and Volunteer Brattan seeded and fertilized six acres in the Mudflow Unit that was cleared of scotch broom earlier this year. A grass/clover mix was broadcast over the area along with winter wheat being seeded in about two acres of the site as a trial to determine if it could be grown to become winter forage for elk on the Wildlife Area. They also suppressed weeds in newly cleared sites.

Cowlitz Wildlife Area

Peterman Unit Storm Water Maintenance: Wildlife area staff maintained culverts on approximately 20 miles of logging and access roads on the Peterman Unit due to a large amount of rainfall this week. Leaves and vegetative debris were removed from culverts and roadside drainage ditches. Staff also installed water bars with the agency backhoe on a 1600 line spur road. High water flows from a beaver dam were causing water to braid down the road.

Klickitat Wildlife Area

Columbia Land Trust Haul Road: Manager Van Leuven visited a project area on the Haul Road that is currently underway with the Columbia Land Trust designed to return the hydrology of the small tributaries of the Klickitat River to a more natural condition for the benefit of fish and wildlife. This stretch of the old Haul Road passes through lands owned by WDFW. The work was on hold for several weeks due to the high fire danger, but cooler and wetter conditions have allowed the project to resume.



Restoration work on the Columbia Land Trust Haul Road is currently underway.

GOAL 2: PROVIDE SUSTAINABLE FISHING, HUNTING AND OTHER WILDLIFE-RELATED RECREATIONAL EXPERIENCES

Wildlife Management

Duck Harvest: District Wildlife Biologist Miller contacted some hunting parties at Willow Grove boat launch this weekend. They had been out on the Columbia River hunting on

Hump/Fisher Island. They reported good numbers of ducks and good shooting opportunities. Geese also use those areas and might be a good opportunity as well once the season opens on November 10.

Wildlife Areas

Klickitat Wildlife Area

Deer: A hunter who visits the Klickitat Wildlife Area every fall sent Manager Van Leuven a photo of a very large buck that he harvested on October 21 near the town of Klickitat, in GMU 578. Mr. Zilke declared that in his many years of hunting in Klickitat County, this buck was the largest-bodied animal he had ever taken.



Private Lands/Access

Technician White visited private land sites on all cooperators during the week. Approximately 20 hunters were contacted on Hancock Timberlands and Western Pacific Forestry lands. Activity was down from the previous week, and by far most active on the weekend. Weather has been warm and wet. Snow at higher elevations on private lands (about 3000 feet) has melted. White also removed old signs on a property that has not been in the program for years. The signs had been causing confusion for hunters.

REGION 6

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Western Snowy Plovers: Biologist Hoenes finalized and submitted a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Recovery Fund proposal to secure funding that will allow for the initiation of predator control in areas where western snowy plovers nest. Washington's population of adult snowy plovers has been declining since 2005 and the primary cause of nest failures has been predation by ravens and crows. Oregon observed similarly suppressed recovery until they initiated predator control in 2004. Since then adult populations have increased to near recovery objectives largely because of increases in nest success and fledgling survival.

Taylor's Checkerspot (TC) Butterfly Sites Clallam County – Biologist McMillan continued consolidating the TC records for Clallam County, Historic and 2012 season data into one spreadsheet referencing associated files that include forms/maps/GPS/electronic records. The focus has been on the Dan Kelly site, to provide a consolidated array of mapped locations of Taylor's Checkerspots. This should be useful for the refinement of the habitat delineations of this site.

Wildlife Areas

Chinook Unit

Manager Guzlas met with R5 MOA staff and Grays River hatchery personnel on October 29 to evaluate the water surface elevations in the Chinook estuary and to make a determination for management of the gates. Due to the projected forecast of heavy rain for the next three days, along with the predicted tidal heights, the second gate was closed on the outgoing tide that afternoon. Over a six day period Astoria gauge showed nearly eight inches of rain in the area.



The Chinook Estuary looking upriver from tide gates.

Manager Guzlas also monitored the Chinook Duck stamp project which has successfully provided nearly 35 acres of flooded smartweed growth. Each of these fields had high concentrations of waterfowl. The ditch plugs throughout the WRP wetland management area continue to provide an increasing number of acres that provide sheetwater habitat on the site. Over 40 acres were inundated on the evening of October 29, and likely an additional 30 became inundated as heavy precipitation continued throughout the week.



Waterfowl using areas full of smartweed and sheetwater in the Chinook Unit.



Smartweed Bounty, Chinook Wildlife Area Unit, Duck Stamp Project.

GOAL 2: PROVIDE SUSTAINABLE FISHING, HUNTING AND OTHER WILDLIFE-RELATED RECREATIONAL EXPERIENCES

Wildlife Management

Cackling Canada Goose Surveys: Biologists Sundstrom and Michaelis participated in the second of four special cackling Canada goose surveys. The surveys are being conducted as part of a multi-regional mark-resight survey to estimate the number of cackling geese that winter in British Columbia, Washington, Oregon and California. Biologist Sundstrom observed 353 cackling geese and Biologist Michaelis observed 1,165. Neither biologist observed collared geese.

Canada Goose Check-Station: Biologists Michaelis and Sundstrom manned the Canada goose check stations in Raymond and Reikkola. The check stations were only open on Saturday, November 3, and Michaelis checked 21 geese from six hunters and Sundstrom checked 12 geese from five hunters. None of the geese checked were determined to be dusky Canada geese.




Willapa Bay Waterfowl Survey: Biologists Hoenes and Michaelis conducted the third of six waterfowl survey flights over Willapa Bay. Totals have not been tallied, but both biologists felt like the number of ducks they observed was similar to the number observed during the October 18th flight. During that flight, Hoenes and Michaelis observed 61,712 ducks with the majority being American wigeon (39,173 or 63 percent). American wigeon were again the dominant species observed, but the overall distribution of ducks in Willapa Bay was quite different. In addition, very few teal were observed. Surveys are being conducted every two weeks until the end of December so biologists can gain a better understanding of the temporal variation in waterfowl usage of Willapa Bay and how it is influenced by the availability of eelgrass.

Wildlife Areas

Chehalis Wildlife Area Unit, Osgood Quality Hunt: Manager Guzlas and wildlife area staff constructed a small parking facility for access to the newly acquired Osgood addition to the Chehalis Wildlife Area Unit. A new gate, fencing, kiosk, property boundary and safety zone signs were installed at the site prior to the waterfowl opener in October. The site will be managed similar to private land quality hunt sites due to the proximity of two residences and a shared road that is used for access. Additional mowing occurred in the back wetland on the Osgood.



Chehalis Wildlife Area Unit, Osgood Parking Facility.



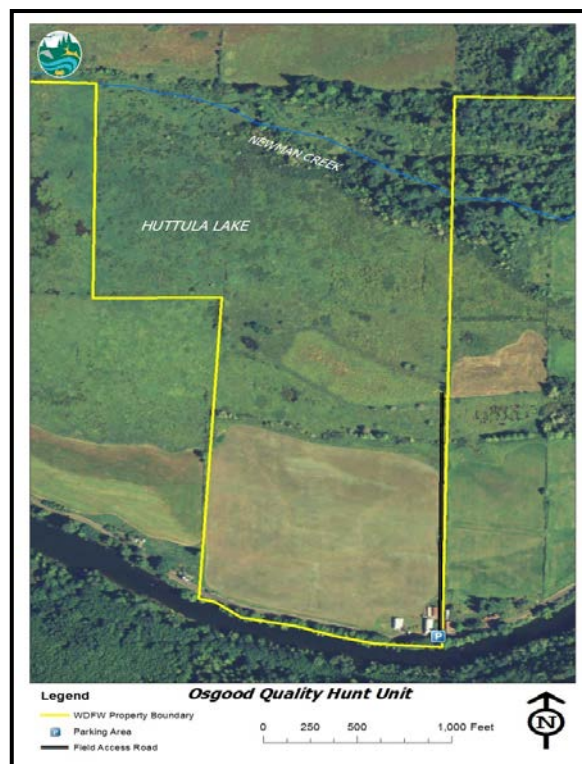
Washington Department of
FISH and WILDLIFE

CHEHALIS WILDLIFE AREA OSGOOD QUALITY HUNT UNIT

WELCOME to the Chehalis Wildlife Area, Osgood Quality Hunt Unit. WDFW acquired these parcels at the end of 2011 with funding provided by the USFWS North American Wetlands Conservation Act Program and Migratory Bird Stamp Funding administered by WDFW. In total, approximately 120 acres were acquired, conserving valuable wetlands associated with the Chehalis River floodplain. WDFW is committed to protecting these wetlands while also maintaining the rich agricultural tradition and providing quality waterfowl hunting access. To ensure that this site remains open to public access please follow all of the posted rules on the site and below.

HUNTING RULES AND CONDITIONS

- Unit open first come, first served (2 hunting groups maximum)
- Restricted parking for hunting
 - 1 vehicle only per parking spot, vehicle secures access
 - Must park in front of signs (Parking Area #1 and #2)
 - Parking allowed from 4am to 6pm
 - No parking along Wenzel Slough Rd.
- Daily 15 shotgun shell limit
- Observe and Obey Unit Posting
 - Safety Zones and Property Boundary Signs
- RESPECT Private Property, the Resource, and Other Hunters
 - Remove all shotgun shells and litter
 - Know your shot distance and quality



Lower Dungeness Unit: Immediately following the 3 Crabs acquisition actions were taken to secure the restaurant buildings and grounds, while still providing public access to the shoreline. Additional security lighting was installed around several buildings access to the buildings was blocked utilizing telephone poles and driftwood logs. Manager Guzlas initiated the Section 106 and SHPO compliance with USFWS and DAHP as the next step toward having five buildings removed from the site. The original restaurant was constructed in 1958, so there is a possibility that the cultural review process and consultation could take several months to complete.



The new 3 Crabs Parking Area on the Lower Dungeness Unit, North Olympic Wildlife Area.



The 3 Crabs shoreline on the Lower Dungeness Unit.